



ACTION08

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOE GIBBONS

DISTRICT 105 ADDRESS:

3150 SW 52nd Avenue
Suite 203
Pembroke Park, FL 33023
(954) 893-5006

CALENDAR

June 14, 2008 – Meet Your Legislator Day

June 28, 2008 – Breast Cancer Awareness
Day in District 105

August 9, 2008 – Joe Gibbons All-Stars
Game/ Back to School Readiness Day

DISTRICT 105 OFFICE STAFF



Morris Cook, Marna Mobley, Carlos Simmons

HELPFUL TIPS

**Where can I go to find out more
information on Bills/Legislation?**

The Senate Web Site at www.flsenate.gov and the House site at www.myfloridahouse.gov are good first steps for information on the legislation that passed and the reasoning behind it.

THE TRANSITION TO DIGITAL TELEVISION

Digital Television (DTV) is an advanced broadcasting technology that will transform your television viewing experience. DTV enables broadcasters to offer television with better picture and sound quality. TV stations are airing digital television programming today, although most will continue to provide analog programming through February 17, 2009. At that point, full-power TV stations will cease broadcasting on their current analog channels.

Consumers who rely on antennas and “rabbit ears” to receive over-the-air broadcast signals on TV sets having only analog tuners will need to obtain separate digital set-top converter boxes to watch over-the-air TV. Until March 31, 2009, households will be eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has responsibility for administering the coupon program. For more information go to www.DTV2009.gov. Cable and satellite subscribers may need new DTV equipment to view DTV programming in digital format. You should ask your provider what you will need and when.



State Representative Joe Gibbons

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Summer 2008



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(954) 893-5006

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COMMITTEES:

Committee on 21st
Century Competitiveness
Committee on Urban & Local
Affairs (Ranking Democrat)
Government Efficiency &
Accountability Council
Rules & Calendar Council
Select Committee to Protect
Personal Information
Select Committee on Autism
& Developmental Disorders
Select Committee on
Condominium & Homeowners
Association and Governance

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

It has been such a pleasure to serve as your Representative this year. I did not want to miss this opportunity to say thanks for believing in me and my ability to lead.

The 2008 Session proved to be an even more difficult task with the budget cuts being as severe as they were. Still, we managed to bring home a few good things for you.

In the few pages of this letter, you will find pertinent information about our District and pictures of events that have taken place in the District in the past few months. You will also find a Calendar of Events for the 2008 summer months.

I hope this information will be helpful to you and more importantly, will provide you with a true picture of the Love that I have for our wonderful District 105!

Sincerely,

Joseph Gibbons
State Representative
District 105



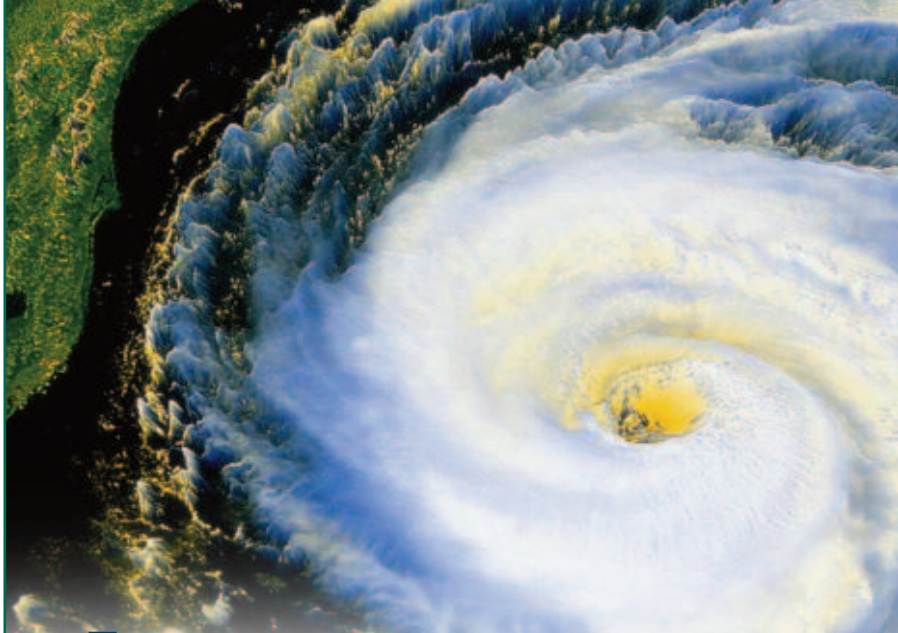
POSITIVE CHANGES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

I have been an advocate for overhauling the state’s K-12 public education system but have been met with resistance. Under current law, all public schools and school districts are graded solely on how well students perform on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, or FCAT.

However, the calls for reform were heard in Tallahassee this year. In a unanimous vote, the Florida House and Senate passed SB 1908, which expands the way high schools are graded under the state’s education accountability system. SB 1908 establishes end-of-course exams in high school to complement the FCAT and introduces civics/government as a required measure of student performance. The bill also reduces the emphasis of FCAT results in high school grades, changes the FCAT writing exam and pushes FCAT exam dates later in school year. The bill expands that assessment for high schools by basing half of the schools’ grades on FCAT scores and half on other important measures such as the schools’ graduation rates and advance placement course offerings.

Our children must prepare to compete in the global job market. Students graduating today are not competing with children from Georgia, New York or California. Rather, competition is from their peers in France, England, Switzerland and Japan. This is why it is critical for students to leave with a well-balanced, cultured education that exposes them to world history, foreign affairs, competitive science standards and new technologies.

My colleagues and I have challenged the status quo accountability system that aims to achieve minimal competence and pays no attention to other areas of student performance. By supporting reforms to the current accountability system, this legislature will be taking steps to improve our public schools. I was proud to be a supporter of SB 1908 because it will introduce new priorities in our public schools. We must build on this year’s passage of SB 1908 so our children are better prepared to compete in the global job market.



LEGISLATURE SAYS: YES TO CONSUMER PROTECTIONS. NO TO RATE REDUCTIONS.

Following two destructive hurricane seasons (2004 and 2005) that resulted in nearly \$36 billion in gross losses, we still have a grossly unstable property insurance market that is unaffordable. Floridians are being squeezed at the gas pumps with record gas prices, unfair property taxes, an ever-increasing cost of living and the ongoing burden of skyrocketing property insurance premiums.

In the last year, more Floridians have received notice from their private insurer that they will be dropped. Sadly, we are far from having a stable property insurance market. Allstate Floridian is in a court battle with the Office of Insurance Regulation because the department has disapproved their rate increase request.

In 2007, this legislature took positive steps to address an ailing market that witnesses unprecedented rate increases. The steps taken last January were aimed at stabilizing the crisis so Floridians could catch their breath. Our hope was that after the 2007 Special Session long term healing would follow as the legislature continued addressing meaningful reforms to achieve a healthily, stable insurance market. Unfortunately, baby steps have been taken to achieve rate relief and the reforms needed to have a stable insurance market.

This year, SB 2860 passed the legislature unanimously because of the good consumer protections in the bill. For example, the bill repeals for a year the practice of insurance companies to increase rates prior to obtaining approval by the office of Insurance Regulation. Also in the bill is the requirement for insurance companies to notify OIR 90 days before non-renewing more than 10,000 policies in one year. More importantly is the requirement that insurance companies cannot drop a customer without a 6 month notification. Finally, SB 2860 extends the Citizens rate freeze until January 1, 2010.

Sadly, this legislation does not address rate reductions. Besides the one year continuation of the Citizens rate freeze, Floridians will continue to have unbearable insurance premiums. I have heard from many of you that we must lower rates. However, I believe what passed this year will not achieve what many of you had in mind, rate reductions. There are good consumer protections in this measure, but without rate relief, Floridians will continue to be crushed.

INVESTING IN CLEAN ENERGY

With energy bills rising and gas hovering above \$4 per gallon, our nation has begun to look towards alternative energy sources to lessen our dependence on foreign oil. The Florida Legislature takes both of these concerns seriously. We worked hard this session to encourage energy efficiency and spur the development and production of alternative and renewable energies in Florida.

HB 7135 creates a 9-member Florida Energy and Climate Commission to guide the state’s alternative energy policies and programs. The bill also authorizes the Department for Environmental Protection to adopt rules for a Cap-and-Trade Regulatory Program to address green house gas emissions from electric utilities, subject to legislative ratification and not prior to the 2010 Legislative Session. Also in the legislation that passed is a requirement that the Public Service Commission adopt goals to increase and promote cost-effective demand-side and supply-side efficiency and conservation programs and renewable energy systems.

HB 7135 adopts Climate Friendly Public Business requirements for the use of “green” products, lodging, vehicles, and fuel and creates energy standards for the construction of new state, county, municipal, school district, state university, community college, state court, and water management district buildings. Finally, the bill creates a Renewable Fuel Standard requiring that beginning on December 31, 2010, all gasoline sold in Florida contain, at a minimum, 10 percent ethanol, by volume.

Reducing energy costs for our families is important. Increasing the production and use of alternative energy benefits our state and will bring great rewards for Floridians in the future. The energy plan that passed this spring takes a significant step forward in moving our state to the national forefront of production and use of alternative energy.



REFORMING FLORIDA’S CONDOMINIUM LAWS

Several months ago the Speaker of the House, Marco Rubio created the Select Committee on Condominium & Homeowners Association Governance. To the average individual, this is quite a long and fancy name, however if we took a look at the time and energy contributed by the committee members, it was certainly a worthwhile endeavor. Representative Gibbons was one of the seven committee members whom worked tirelessly to arrive at a comprehensive and rational approach that would satisfy owners as well as the Board members. The purview of the Select Committee was limited to the governance of condominium, cooperatives and homeowners associations, to include accounting, budgeting, audits, theft by officers and access to condominium and cooperatives records held by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

The Select Committee held numerous meetings throughout the State of Florida with the final gathering taking place in Tallahassee. The findings and recommendations were addressed to the Speaker, the Jobs & Entrepreneurship Council and the Safety & Security Council. The



UNINSURED FLORIDIANS COULD SEE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE

One of Governor Charlie Crist’s top priorities, and a priority of my colleagues, was seeking to address the problem of the uninsured in Florida. There are an estimated 3.8 million people without insurance in the state, with cost given as one of the primary reasons for lack of coverage.



SB 2534 passed the legislature near unanimously because it’s the latest attempt to address the affordability crisis of health insurance. The Cover Florida health insurance plan, which is part of comprehensive reforms that passed this year, is a step in the right direction. I do not expect it to solve the acute health care crisis facing our state, but it may begin to address it. The Cover Florida contains needed oversight, which will likely produce insurance products that help many of our residents.

The Cover Florida plan will provide non-catastrophic coverage, offering preventive health services, including immunizations, annual health assessments, well-woman and well-care services, and preventive screenings such as mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, and noninvasive colorectal or prostate screenings; incentives for routine preventive care; office visits for the diagnosis and treatment of illness or injury; office surgery, including anesthesia; behavioral health services; durable medical equipment and prosthetics; and, diabetic supplies.

The legislation that passed this year has brought this issue to the forefront and has moved us in the right direction. I was pleased to see that stronger consumer protections were a part of the final package. It is important that consumers get educated on the new insurance products that will be offered.

committee made a number of deletions and additions to the current legislative laws which will be reflected in the Florida Statutes, chapters 718,719 and 720 and are scheduled to go into effect in October 2008.

Among the changes in the new bill are issues involving; board member individual liability, penalties for anyone intentionally destroying association accounting records and prior to filing a lien against a unit for unpaid assessments, the association must send a unit owner 30 days advanced notice of its intent to file a lien by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Overall the Select Committee has done a superb job in trying to meet the demands of both the unit owners and the Board members. For further information regarding HB 995, Please do not hesitate to contact our office at (954)893-5006.